

II. SPECIFICATION AMENDMENTS

Please replace the paragraphs/sections beginning on page 1, line 20 through line 29 as rewritten below:

The present invention relates to apparatus and methods for thermomechanically treating sintered and heat treated powder metal steel gears in the metastable austenitic condition to produce increased surface densification and plastic deformation of the load bearing surfaces and, thereby, higher strength and accurate contact surfaces through a net shape finishing process. The invention particularly relates to an apparatus and method for increasing the bending strength and surface durability of powder metal gears by ausforming the tooth surface and sub-surface layers of gears including spur, helical and ~~bevel-intersecting~~ axis type gears. Applications for ausformed powder metal gears include automotive power transmissions in the operation of which the gears are subjected to high loads and speeds.

Please replace the paragraphs/sections beginning on page 8, line 20 through line 29 as rewritten below:

Another feature of the present invention is the provision of an apparatus and method for increasing the bending strength and surface durability of powder metal gears by ausforming the tooth surface and sub-surface layers of gears including spur, helical and intersecting axis ~~bevel~~-type gears, where the intersecting axis type gears include at least one of a bevel gear including straight bevel gears and spiral bevel gears, a hypoid gear, a worm gear, and a worm-wheel gear.